

An atheist at an inner city meeting in a University Gymnasium on the existence of God pointing to a ghetto said, "If there was a God, he would never let a mess like this exist." He then pointed out the pain, poverty, disease, loneliness and disease that were in the world.

There was a sign, evidently left over from a High School Career Day that said "Take the High Road out of the Neighborhood-Get an Education." When asked what it meant, the atheist responded that the programs offered by the University would help the young people develop their talents so that they could get a job that would enable them to work their way out of the seemingly hopeless situation.

"Does it take any work on the part of the young people themselves?"

"Of course, they have to take advantage of the opportunities offered to them and then work to succeed."

"God has never done for man what man could do for himself. If you really want to find the high road out of the grip of poverty, drugs, abuse, prostitution, or any other destructive influence on this planet, you have to take advantage of the opportunities given to you or you will never make it. The road to destruction, the low road, is a road of inactivity."

"If the low road is followed, it not only is unlikely to solve the problems, but it is sure to produce a blizzard of consequences for those who have followed it-poor self image, lack of appreciation, lack of satisfaction, lack of identity, poor self-esteem, lack of commitment,."

Just as it is true in life, the same is true
spiritually!

Mat 7:13 "Enter by the narrow gate;
for the gate is wide, and the way is
broad that leads to destruction, and
many are those who enter by it. (14)

"For the gate is small, and the way is
narrow that leads to life, and few are
those who find it.

If you want to find an easy religion,
one that takes no effort, the gospel
of Jesus is not for you!

2Ti 2:15 Be diligent to present
yourself approved to God as a
workman who does not need to be
ashamed, handling accurately the
word of truth.

It is not sufficient to complain about our situation, but we must do something about it.

Joh 12:42 Nevertheless many even
of the rulers believed in Him, but
because of the Pharisees they were
not confessing Him, lest they
should be put out of the
synagogue;

To take the “high road” you may
have to quit your job!

Jas 1:23 For if anyone is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like a man who looks at his natural face in a mirror; (24) for once he has looked at himself and gone away, he has immediately forgotten what kind of person he was.

Jesus calls for change constantly!

It is not sufficient to have
chosen Christ and then do nothing
more.

Rom 6:1 What shall we say then?
Are we to continue in sin that grace
might increase?

Gal 5:25 If we live by the Spirit, let us also walk by the Spirit.

Have you thought about the changes some of the Corinthian brethren had to make?

1Co 6:9 Or do you not know that the unrighteous shall not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived; neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor effeminate, nor homosexuals, (10) nor thieves, nor the covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor swindlers, shall inherit the kingdom of God. (11) And such were some of you; but you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, and in the Spirit of our God.

NET – 1Co 6:9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived! The sexually immoral, idolaters, adulterers, passive homosexual partners, practicing homosexuals, 10 thieves, the greedy, drunkards, the verbally abusive, and swindlers will not inherit the kingdom of God. 11 Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

The question of how brethren deal with such Christians is a troubling one, as we often cannot tell about the “private” lives of Christians, especially in a large metropolitan area.

Are brethren able to change?
Obviously they can from 1Co 6.11

NET– 11 Some of you once lived this way. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.

“The 15-year recidivism rate is 13 percent for incest perpetrators, 24 percent for rapists, and 35 percent for child molesters of boy victims. ... although average rates tell us what percentage reoffends one or more times, we also need to be aware that a subset reoffends at a frighteningly high rate. In addition, there are reasons to think that published findings underestimate the true rates. Most research necessarily omits those offenders who were not detected and arrested or whose victims did not report the crime. Further, many sex offenders plea-bargain down to a nonsexual offense.”

The persons referred to in the previous slide were not necessarily believers in Jesus although this belief should help them in overcoming their sin.

1Co 10:12 Therefore let him who thinks he stands take heed lest he fall.

For those who are drunkards, the effort must be intense.

“The recovery process proceeds quickly during the early years of abstinence. However, recovery takes in total 10 years or longer. The relapse risk is not significantly decreased nor stable before the third year of abstinence.”

“the results of the few valid investigations of long-term outcome are inconsistent: objective information on drinking status indicates that only 6% to 18% of patients are abstinent at 2-year followup. In contrast, studies relying on self-report data suggest that approximately 30% of patients are abstinent 2 to 3 years after treatment”

Eph 2:10 For we are His workmanship,
created in Christ Jesus for good works,
which God prepared beforehand, that
we should walk in them.

He didn't say, "The preacher, elder
deacon, etc. was created for good
works."

Each one of us needs to work!

God is not the source of our problems

Jas 1:13 Let no one say when he is tempted, "I am being tempted by God"; for God cannot be tempted by evil, and He Himself does not tempt anyone. (14) But each one is tempted when he is carried away and enticed by his own lust. (15) Then when lust has conceived, it gives birth to sin; and when sin is accomplished, it brings forth death.

As the earlier quote said, “If you really want to find the high road out of the grip of poverty, drugs, abuse, prostitution, or any other destructive influence on this planet, you have to take advantage of the opportunities given to you or you will never make it.”

We are the root of most of our
problems

Gal 6:7 Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, this he will also reap. (8) For the one who sows to his own flesh shall from the flesh reap corruption, but the one who sows to the Spirit shall from the Spirit reap eternal life.

God expects us to be involved in overcoming the destructive forces in our lives, both physically and spiritually.

Mat 13:14 "And in their case the prophecy of Isaiah is being fulfilled, which says, 'YOU WILL KEEP ON HEARING, BUT WILL NOT UNDERSTAND; AND YOU WILL KEEP ON SEEING, BUT WILL NOT PERCEIVE; (15) FOR THE HEART OF THIS PEOPLE HAS BECOME DULL, AND WITH THEIR EARS THEY SCARCELY HEAR, AND THEY HAVE CLOSED THEIR EYES LEST THEY SHOULD SEE WITH THEIR EYES, AND HEAR WITH THEIR EARS, AND UNDERSTAND WITH THEIR HEART AND RETURN, AND I SHOULD HEAL THEM.' (16)

"But blessed are your eyes, because they see; and your ears, because they hear.

Are you willing to go to work for
God?

You must start by being willing to
do as he asks.

Acts 22:16 And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized, and have your sins washed away, calling on his name.'